

January 6, 2012

Brief on

Branstad-Reynolds
Administration Recommendations
for World-Class Schools



2012 Legislative Session

Dear Iowans,

In advance of the 2012 legislative session, I am pleased to provide for your review this legislative brief on Gov. Terry E. Branstad's and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds' education reform package. The purpose is to provide a broad overview of the components of the package, give some examples of where similar approaches are in place, and provide cost estimates.



In collaboration with the Governor's Office, the staff at the Iowa Department of Education and I have worked intensively to prepare a set of legislative proposals worthy of careful consideration. I believe this package puts us on the path to our unshakable vision of having one of the best school systems in the world. Iowa's children deserve nothing less.

While this document is no substitute for reading the proposed legislation in detail, our hope is that it orients legislators and the public to the issues being addressed and provides a quick reference guide for discussion.

We live in extraordinarily fast-moving times for education. International competition, a convergence of education views from both sides of the political aisle, and state efforts to meet the waiver process set out by the U.S. Department of Education for relief from the No Child Left Behind law all call us to seize this opportunity to make sweeping improvements to our schools.

We welcome a vigorous discussion and vetting of the Governor's and Lt. Governor's proposal. Better decisions are reached through the collective wisdom of our democracy, and we all share a common goal of a better education for our children.

Education is a gift we give to future generations in order to prepare them, our state, and our nation for the opportunities ahead, both foreseen and unknown. The Iowans who came before us shouldered the responsibility and gave this gift of education to all of us. It is now our responsibility to pay it forward for future generations of Iowans.

With respect and admiration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason E. Glass". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jason E. Glass, Ed.D.
State Director and Chief Learner
Iowa Department of Education

Table of Contents

Component	Page
Iowa Education Job Clearinghouse	4
Teacher Preparation Program Selectivity and Student Teaching	4
Alternative Pathways into the Education Profession	5
Bringing Educator Licensure into the Department of Education	5
Educator Evaluation	6
Extending Teacher and Administrator Probationary Status	6
Educator Nonrenewal and Dismissal	7
Ending Seniority-Based Layoffs (Last In – First Out)	7
School Administration Manager (SAM) Program	8
Strategically Aligning Professional Development	8
Taskforce on Teacher Leadership and Compensation	8
Continuing and Expanding the Work of the Iowa Core	10
Kindergarten Readiness Measures	10
High School End-of-Course Exams	11
The Program for International Student Assessment	11
College and Career Readiness Measures	11
Value-Added Measures (VAM)	12
Statewide Literacy Program	12
Project Lead the Way	13
Innovation Acceleration Fund	14
Competency-Based Education	14
Online Learning	15
Charter Schools	15
Increased Waiver Authority	15
Statewide Parent Engagement Network	16
Task Force on Time and Schools	16
Concluding Remarks	17

Section I – Great Teachers and Leaders

Component: Iowa Education Job Clearinghouse

What it's about: Being more selective about who is hired to teach is an area where we can certainly make improvements. Too frequently, teaching positions, especially those in high-need subjects or jobs in rural schools, have low numbers of qualified applicants. The selection process is less competitive than it should be.

The Branstad-Reynolds Administration's proposal establishes a statewide web-based education employment system where every public preK-12 education job in the state is posted and applicants complete one application. The creation of this state system will make our process more efficient, allow us to better recruit teaching talent nationally, and provide us with better data about educator supply and demand. At the same time, the system will keep hiring decisions within school districts, reduce paperwork for applicants, and will provide cost savings to districts. States including [Kentucky](#) and [North Carolina](#) have already developed forms of these statewide employment systems. Iowa currently has a system called [Teach Iowa](#). But, with no requirement that districts or schools post jobs on the site, no applicant tracking system, and no real pathway to licensure from the site, it is an incomplete landing page to find teaching jobs in Iowa. About 80 percent of districts currently participate in a program called [Iowa REAP](#), but without all districts participating, it is an incomplete system as well.

The system the Administration proposes would have applicants for teaching jobs take a personality and disposition assessment (such as [Gallup's Teacher Insight](#)), which schools could use as an optional part of their selection process. These are well-developed assessments already used by many school districts and top-performing systems around the world. This assessment could be built directly into the new education job clearinghouse, and the data would be available to districts and schools as part of the employment process.

This system would be a support to schools across Iowa. It would be a cost-saving element for schools as the state would pick up the costs, but districts would retain complete autonomy on the selection of the best candidates.

State budget impact: \$500,000

Component: Improving Teacher Preparation Program Selectivity and Student Teaching

What it's about: As detailed in this McKinsey & Company report, [Closing the Talent Gap: Attracting and Retaining Top Third Graduates to Careers in Teaching](#), a common theme among the highest-performing school systems around the world is that they become very selective about who gets to be an educator. Reliable top performers Finland, Singapore, and South

Korea recruit 100 percent of their educators from the top third of the academic pool. The U.S., by comparison, only recruits 23 percent of educators from the top third.

The Branstad-Reynolds Administration's proposal outlines some clear steps we can take to improve our talent pipeline. These include raising standards for entry into teacher preparation programs to include having at least a 3.0 cumulative college GPA and passing a pre-professional skills test in the top 75 percent nationally. We should also make sure educators who seek licensure have solid content knowledge by requiring candidates to pass content-specific and teaching knowledge assessments in the top 75 percent nationally. This proposal includes extending the student-teaching experience to 15 weeks to improve clinical experiences teachers have before exiting their teacher preparation programs.

State budget impact: \$0

Component: Alternative Pathways into the Education Profession

What it's about: Restricting the on-ramps into the education profession limits potential educator talent, particularly in hard-to-staff areas. While we should resist efforts to swing the door wide open to allow anyone to enter the teaching profession, alternative pathways, with solid and rigorous quality assurance checks, can bring talented individuals into education. This is especially true for hard-to-fill positions, such as math and science or applied arts teachers. Teaching isn't the only area where the talent level would be improved by adding alternative pathways. Leadership roles, such as school principals and superintendents, should also be opened to allow the possibility of alternative pathway candidates to compete for positions where they may be the right fit.

This proposal includes widening alternative pathways to allow teachers, principals, and superintendents to come into the profession from non-traditional pathways. Quality is paramount, so the same GPA and assessment requirements of the traditional pathway also would be required of alternative pathways. Candidates in alternative routes would be required to undergo training in teaching or administration and have practical experience under a mentor before gaining full licensure status.

State budget impact: \$0

Component: Bringing Educator Licensure into the Iowa Department of Education

What it's about: Iowa currently has a fractured system when it comes to educator licensure and the rest of the education system. While the Department of Education oversees most parts of the state education system, including teacher preparation program accreditation, a separate Board of Educational Examiners oversees educator licensure. Iowans who are unaware of the distinction regularly direct questions about licensure issues to the Department. Candidates seeking teaching or administrative positions are frequently confused by this fractured system.

This proposal includes moving licensure into the Department of Education, where a new internal structure will be created focusing on educator effectiveness. This change will bring

educator preparation program accreditation and licensure together in a more efficient and responsive organizational structure. Currently, much of the work of the Board of Educational Examiners focuses on educator ethics issues, violations, and sanctions. This is an important element to preserve, so the proposal keeps the Board of Educational Examiners as an entity to address ethical issues while moving licensure components to a logical home at the Department of Education.

Pulling the licensure elements under the Department of Education also streamlines government and is in keeping with the Governor's goal of reducing the overall size of state government and clarifies the accountability for licensure decisions.

State budget impact: \$0

Component: Educator Evaluation

What it's about: Iowa is to be commended for its past work on educator standards and evaluation systems. However, there is still much work to do in updating these systems to meet the goals of continuous improvement and accountability. We need evaluation systems that reflect current best practices in teaching and leading and that are more sophisticated than just "meets" or "doesn't meet" expectations in the feedback they provide educators. The work of improving educator evaluation is a national issue, and Iowa can move to the front of this discussion by taking on this issue directly. The landmark report, [*The Widget Effect*](#), outlines the national problem when it comes to evaluation, support, and addressing ineffectiveness.

To ensure every educator gets personalized and timely feedback for improvement, the Administration's plan calls for all teachers and administrators to be evaluated at least annually, rather than the every-three-years model we have in place now for non-probationary educators. The proposal formally creates a standing task force to continually improve the evaluation systems for educators and calls for the state to build uniform systems of evaluation with supporting electronic data collection programs. The Administration's proposal would also align educator standards and evaluations from pre-service training through in-service careers. It is problematic and confusing for those in teacher preparation programs to have a different set of standards and a different evaluation system than working teachers. Iowa is already engaged in some aspects of this work as required for a waiver from the federal No Child Left Behind law.

State budget impact: \$500,000

Component: Extending Teacher and Administrator Probationary Status to Five Years

What it's about: All educators benefit from real classroom experience and supports in their early years. However, the fact remains that some educators will turn out to be effective, and others won't. If this profession is indeed as important as we say it is, then we need to be more selective about who gets to remain in the education profession.

This proposal calls for extending the probationary status to five years for teachers and administrators, giving schools more time to make a good judgment about whether a person is going to be an effective educator before additional job protections are provided.

State budget impact: \$0

Component: Educator Nonrenewal and Dismissal

What it's about: Currently, the process to terminate the contract of an ineffective educator, or to dismiss an educator for good cause, extends to the court system with appeals all the way to the Iowa Supreme Court. While due process should be maintained, the court system is fundamentally the wrong venue for an appeal of a performance-related employment decision. The burden of proof for a nonrenewal or dismissal should not be on par with that needed for a trial.

The current system creates a self-perpetuating cycle in which ineffective educators remain in schools for far too long. Administrators and school boards resort to coercive tactics, sometimes called “counseling out,” to get ineffective educators to quit because the formal process is so complex and litigious. These coercive tactics reinforce, for some educators, the need for an overly complex and litigious system to protect employees. This vicious cycle needs to be broken.

This proposal would have probationary educators (in their first five years) who are underperforming be subject to contract nonrenewal at the end of any school year. For non-probationary educators (sixth year and thereafter) who are underperforming and any educator being dismissed for good cause, this proposal calls for the school board to make a determination on terminating an educator’s contract based on the employee’s annual evaluation or other evidence. One outside adjudicator review would be allowed to make sure the employee was evaluated fairly and provided due process in the evaluation and nonrenewal process. Access to the court system would still be available for any civil rights or employee mistreatment issues, as it would be available to any Iowan.

State budget impact: \$0

Component: Ending Seniority-Based or “Last-In-First-Out” (LIFO) Layoffs

What it's about: If our goal really is to have the best educators working with our students, using a largely seniority-based layoff system is not consistent with that goal. In the unfortunate, but sometimes necessary, instance of schools needing to lay off employees, some consideration should be taken for performance and not just date of hire.

This proposal would require that performance be the primary determinant in making layoff decisions. While seniority could be considered as part of the decision, it would be secondary to employee performance and needs of the school district. Exact systems and processes for how this occurs would still be bargained and determined in each district, but the LIFO process, as we

know it, would come to an end in Iowa. Our goal must be protecting the most effective educators working with our students.

State budget impact: \$0

Component: School Administration Manager (SAM) Program

What it's about: Our most effective building principals are instructional leaders who make the time to get into classrooms. Unfortunately, the job of being a principal can become less and less instructional and more focused on the day-to-day management duties that come with running a school. These building management responsibilities are important and necessary, but the building principal must attend to the quality of instruction as job one.

The [SAM Program](#) helps give principals the time to focus on instruction by delegating some time-consuming tasks of building management to other staff members, called SAMs. SAMs may be new staff positions or an existing staff person who takes on new duties. Configurations on how SAMs might function vary from school to school, but the goal is the same – free the building principal to get into classrooms.

An [Iowa SAM Program](#) has already been put in place for Iowa, funded by philanthropic grant dollars. Going forward, costs of employing the SAM would be the responsibility of each district and school, but the state would cover the costs of taking the system of training and supports to scale statewide.

State budget impact: \$500,000

Component: Strategically Aligning Professional Development

What it's about: Iowa's nine Area Education Agencies (AEA) provide a number of valuable services to school districts and accredited nonpublic schools. One major focus of these agencies is to provide a statewide network of professional development for educators. The AEA system and the Department of Education have been working together recently to provide support in a more targeted and cohesive way to schools, but the struggle to operate as a more unified system remains.

This proposal would have the Department of Education annually target areas for professional development based on state needs and direction. AEAs would create plans to address these areas and submit them to the state for approval or revision. The goal is to get Iowa's education system to work toward common purposes and goals and to use our resources in a more targeted and strategic way. School districts would either use an approved AEA-developed professional development plan or ask the Department director for approval to produce their own plans.

State budget impact: \$0

Component: A Task Force on Teacher Leadership and Compensation

What it's about: When the Governor and Lt. Governor released the state blueprint for education, [One Unshakable Vision](#), in October, the blueprint included a plan to redesign

educator career pathways and to create teacher leadership roles. The plan also included ideas around retooling the compensation structure to support this new educator career structure.

After listening to lowans' many good questions at town hall meetings and because of the natural budgetary limitations that come from being halfway through a biennial budget, this proposal asks the Legislature to create a state taskforce to study these important issues and to make recommendations in time for the 2013 legislative session.

These teacher leadership structures are not new. Since 2001, Iowa has had such a system in statute; however, the compensation system was never restructured, and appropriate resources were never applied. Meanwhile, the [TAP System](#) is in place in schools across the country, covering 20,000 teachers and over 200,000 students. Also, the [National Education Association](#) recently released a document outlining recommendations for the future of the teaching profession with teacher leadership roles. Internationally, some of the [highest-performing systems](#) use teacher leadership structures.

Teacher leadership roles and how they relate to compensation issues are technical and difficult issues to tackle. But now is the time for Iowa to lead the country in this effort.

State Budget Impact: \$100,000 for one year

Section II: High Expectations and Fair Measures

Component: Continuing and Expanding the Work of the Iowa Core

What it's about: As the last state in the country to adopt clear expectations for students at the state level, Iowa has some catching up to do. By mandating the Iowa Core in 2008, and its merger with the voluntary national Common Core in 2010, Iowa joins a majority movement comprising more than 40 states in elevating the expectations for student learning toward the highest-performing systems internationally.

A tightly aligned education system should have consistency from the standards to the curriculum and in the assessments. More directly, what is expected is what is taught and what is measured.

An important point in this discussion is that the Iowa Core is not a “curriculum,” but rather a set of standards and expectations for students. Local district leaders and classroom teachers take these standards and turn them into a detailed curriculum and lessons for students. There is a balance to be struck between the state setting the standards and these standards being brought to life through curriculum design and lesson planning. While choices about curriculum and lessons should be solidly in the purview of school districts, the state can support the implementation of the Iowa Core by providing model curricula that may be used as a guide and starting point.

This proposal also would work to expand the Iowa Core into other areas that have been neglected for too long, such as music and other fine arts, foreign languages, entrepreneurial education, physical education, applied arts, and character education.

State Budget Impact: \$1,000,000

Component: Kindergarten Readiness Measures

What it's about: Many schools in Iowa already give a kindergarten readiness measure (such as the [Gold Assessment](#)) for students in the state voluntary preschool program.

This proposal would have all 4-year-olds in the state voluntary preschool program complete a kindergarten readiness assessment that would determine early literacy and numeracy skills. The assessment would provide schools a starting point for instruction once these students enter kindergarten and would provide comparative data on the performance of preschool programs across the state.

State Budget Impact: \$300,000

Component: High School End-of-Course Exams

What it's about: A Center on Education Policy report noted that 26 states give some form of a high school exit exam, and a growing number (14 states projected by 2015) are using end-of-course exams as part of high school assessments. Currently, Iowa does neither of these.

This proposal calls for the development of end-of-course exams in core areas such as algebra, English, science, and U.S. history. These assessments would be developed to measure applied knowledge, rather than just the ability to memorize facts, and would contain writing components. Over time, the results on this suite of assessments would be used as a component of graduation. Options include making them a part of the student's final grade or having students pass them as a requirement for earning a diploma.

The purpose of these assessments is to more tightly align the standards in the Iowa Core with what is actually taught in these high school subjects. In addition, these assessments could take the place of any summative assessments given by classroom teachers now, effectively making this a trade-off and not adding more assessments for high school students.

State Budget Impact: \$2,000,000

Component: The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)

What it's about: The international [PISA](#) test is the best nation-to-nation indicator of educational progress in the world. Administered to a sampling of students in more than 60 countries, PISA assesses reading, mathematical and scientific literacy every three years. This assessment asks students for more than just basic content knowledge; it asks students to apply content knowledge in problem-solving and critical-thinking situations, and the assessments are scored by trained reviewers rather than by a computer scanner.

This proposal calls for a sampling of about 3,000 students in the ninth grade to take the PISA every three years, following the same procedures of countries all over the world. Data from this assessment will give Iowa information on how well our education system is doing versus the international competition our students will face once they graduate.

State Budget Impact: \$1,500,000 every three years

Component: College and Career Readiness Measures

What it's about: This proposal calls for all 11th grade students to take a college entrance exam (such as the [ACT](#) or [SAT](#)). The reasons for this are two-fold. First, every student in Iowa should leave high school with one of the keys they need for college. Given the globally competitive nature of our economy, getting more students to consider college and providing them with one of the keys to entry is an investment in our young people and in the future prosperity of our state. The state will cover the expense of students taking the college entrance exam. The

current assessment given in the 11th grade (the Iowa Tests of Educational Development) would be phased out by 2015.

In addition to a college entrance exam, this proposal would allow students to choose to take a career readiness assessment. This measure would provide students considering career options after high school an indication of their readiness to enter today's workforce. Elements such as applied mathematics and business writing would be covered, but students would also gain insight on their readiness for teamwork, critical thinking, and analyzing information. The state would cover the cost for those students who opt to take the career readiness assessment.

State Budget Impact: \$2,500,000

Component: Value-Added Measures (VAM)

What it's about: [VAM](#) is not a test. Rather, it is a method of analyzing assessment data that accounts for student background and demographics in determining whether students are making expected growth from year to year. For the most part, Iowa uses an "achievement" method of determining school progress – meaning the measurement of whether students are able to score above the proficiency line. While the percentage of students who meet proficiency is important, we have to recognize that students come to us from different starting points. In evaluating our schools and educational programs, we have to take student growth and background demographics into account when interpreting the data. Most econometric studies evaluating the effects of educational programs use value-added measures as the determinant variable on whether the program had any effect on student learning.

VAM is a powerful, sophisticated, and complex statistical approach to looking at student data. This measure would also be the backbone of how Iowa would measure student growth as part of our accountability system through the federal waiver process of the No Child Left Behind law.

This proposal calls for making VAM available at the individual student, teacher, grade, school, and district levels. At the teacher level, this information would be available to districts as a validation of their observational teacher evaluation for tested subjects and grades, where available. But this proposal clearly makes the information at the teacher level part of an employee record and not subject to open records requests, which addresses concerns about teacher privacy. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act already protects student-level data.

State Budget Impact: \$1,500,000

Component: Statewide Literacy Program

What it's about: Almost everyone agrees on the importance of [reading as a gateway skill to learning](#). In particular, reading by the end of third grade is a key point in the learning process because it is where most kids make the transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn."

This proposal calls for all students, beginning in preschool, to be taught with an evidence-based reading program that covers the five components of reading (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension). Students who are struggling would need to be provided 90-minute blocks of reading instruction, and parents would be notified annually if their children are in danger of not meeting basic literacy standards by the end of third grade. Schools would be required to identify struggling readers, from preschool through third grade, and provide these students with intense, individualized, and specific supports.

Students finishing third grade who do not meet basic literacy requirements across a broad set of measures would be retained and provided intensive reading assistance that could include one-on-one or small group reading supports, summer school programs, or specialized tutoring. A number of good-cause exemptions would be established for students with disabilities or students learning English.

This proposal would also create an Iowa Reading Research Center to serve as a clearinghouse and disseminator of research-based approaches to reading. The center will serve as a resource and support for educators charged with implementing high-quality reading programs, including support for professional development. Information also will be provided for parents, all with the goal of making sure Iowa students are literate at the end of third grade.

State Budget Impact: \$10,000,000

Component: Project Lead the Way

What it's about: Project Lead the Way is a project-based and hands-on middle school and high school science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) curriculum. Students create, design, build, discover, and collaborate while solving problems in STEM areas. Students are exposed to real-world problems and learn from working STEM professionals in internships and mentoring opportunities.

Using a curriculum designed by teachers, university professors, and working STEM professionals, Project Lead the Way promotes key 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.

The Administration's proposal makes Project Lead the Way eligible for concurrent enrollment supplemental weighted funding for high school/community college credit.

State Budget Impact: \$0

Section III – Innovation

Component: Innovation Acceleration Fund

What it's about: The best organizations of any kind never stand still. Getting on top, and more important, staying there, means trying new approaches and taking risks. Developing a culture of innovation in all of our schools can be supported through system-sponsored experimentation. In business, this is accomplished through a focus on research and development. To meet our vision of being a world-class school system, Iowa should encourage this spirit of innovation in schools across the state.

This proposal calls for the creation of an Innovation Acceleration Fund with money from the state, from philanthropies and foundations, and from the business sector. These funds would be available to schools and to community-based nonprofit organizations across Iowa through a competitive-bid process. Preference would be given in this process to schools tackling the toughest problems with the most innovative approaches. Awards would be made on a regional basis with special categories for all sizes of districts and a special focus on statewide priority policy areas, such as science, technology, engineering, and math.

State Budget Impact: \$2,000,000

Component: Competency-Based Education

What it's about: Our system for awarding credit for coursework is primarily driven by time-based factors. Students are awarded credit for sitting in a chair for a number of hours and performing at a minimally acceptable level (such as 61 percent or a D-). This time-based system is the root of the outdated “industrial” or “factory” model of education. The truth is, some students don’t need the seat-time requirements we have now, while others need more. Some students can demonstrate mastery of a course on the first day, while others require more time and attention. Moving away from the industrial model requires making high levels of learning the constant and time the variable, rather than the current system, which is just the reverse.

[Competency-based education](#) raises a number of technical and adaptive challenges. How will “competency,” or even “mastery,” be determined? How are grades to be assigned? How are GPAs calculated? What does school look like in a competency-based system? Districts in Alaska and Colorado are already overcoming these problems, and New Hampshire has adopted a competency-based approach statewide.

This proposal for Iowa removes barriers to schools choosing to adopt competency-based systems. Currently, districts must apply for waivers with the Department of Education on an annual basis to move to a competency-based approach. The proposed legislation would create a pathway to competency-based education for districts that are willing to engage in the work of adopting such a system without having to request permission from the Department of Education.

State Budget Impact: \$0

Component: Online Learning

What it's about: [Online learning](#) has come a long way and is growing at a rapid pace nationally. While our primary concern should always be quality and student outcomes when it comes to any course, Iowa should be engaged in the work of expanding online learning as an option for students.

This proposal creates two pathways for online learning in schools across Iowa. First, districts can engage directly with online content providers, and the responsibility would be on the district to make sure the courses offered meet Iowa quality standards, such as being backed by an Iowa licensed teacher and being aligned to the Iowa Core. The proposal also creates a second pathway by expanding the existing [Iowa Learning Online](#) (ILO) to serve as a statewide clearinghouse for quality online content that meets Iowa quality standards and is backed by an Iowa licensed teacher. Districts could purchase content from ILO and be assured courses are high quality and meet Iowa standards. The ILO program would need start-up money for three years to get off the ground and would be self-sustaining after that.

State Budget Impact: \$1,800,000 a year for three years

Component: Charter Schools

What it's about: Iowa's current charter school law is restrictive in that it only allows existing school districts to establish charter schools. As a result, the state only has a handful of charters. Charter schools are a mechanism to bring greater innovation into the state education system and to provide greater school choice options for all families.

This proposal would provide a wider pathway for charters. School districts could still start charter schools, but so could universities, community colleges, and nonprofit organizations, as well as collaborative efforts of all these groups. Charter schools would need to demonstrate how their approach would improve education and would be vetted by the State Board of Education. Charter schools would be public schools that are open to all students, including those with disabilities or those learning English. Employees of charter schools would be considered public employees, and all laws governing public employees (including collective bargaining rights) would apply. Charter schools would be held to the same system of accountability as other public schools, and those charters not effective in serving students and families would be closed.

State Budget Impact: \$500,000

Component: Increased Waiver Authority

What it's about: In discussions across the state, school leaders expressed the need for greater flexibility for school districts to meet statutory requirements so regular public schools could better apply "outside-the-box" solutions to improve learning.

This proposal would provide school districts the same flexibility that charter schools have. It would give the director of the Department of Education the authority to waive compliance with

rule or statute for schools wishing to use an innovative approach that isn't currently allowed. The director would have Department staff set guidelines for what sort of waivers would be considered. After staff vetting, the director would ultimately make the decision on this increased flexibility and would report back to the Legislature annually on waivers granted.

State Budget Impact: \$0

Component: Statewide Parent Engagement Network

What it's about: Most everyone would agree that parent involvement and engagement in their children's learning contributes significantly to student success. Educators and policymakers bemoan the lack of meaningful parent engagement in schools all across Iowa. Nowhere is this lack of parent engagement more evident than in our struggling schools in high-poverty areas around the state.

Iowa currently has a system called the [Iowa Parent Information Resource Center](#) (Iowa PIRC), which runs a federally funded program called the [Iowa Sustaining Parent Involvement Network](#) (ISPIN). This program has been effective at increasing parent engagement and student achievement in the schools where it has operated. This proposal would take this system statewide with a tiered model of supports. Under this tiered model, all schools would be provided access to information, resources, and training. Schools that struggle with student achievement would be provided more targeted and intensive supports.

State Budget Impact: \$500,000

Component: Task Force on Time and Schools

What it's about: In town hall meetings on education across the state, Iowans asked how school calendars, extended days, and the extended year fit into the broader discussions on reform. It was evident that this is an issue Iowans want to discuss.

While we are working to move away from a purely time-based system of education, we do have to recognize that time is an important structural component around which we base a number of educational decisions. We award academic credit, set educator compensation, determine school logistics, and plan family life around school time.

This proposal calls for a statewide Taskforce on Time and Schools to convene and study this complex (and often contentious) issue and make recommendations to the Legislature for the 2013 session. Issues discussed by this group will include alternative school year calendars, extended day, extended year, cost, and targeted additional time for struggling students. [A set of recommendations from the National Academy of Education](#) supports efforts to extend learning opportunities for students.

State Budget Impact: \$100,000 for one year

Concluding Remarks from Director Glass

The Administration's proposal marks a bold new beginning for Iowa's schools. This sweeping package of proposals is intended to jump-start Iowa's education system to compete globally in an age when being average just isn't good enough.

Questions concerning the resources necessary to enact and sustain these proposals are important. The total cost of this package comes to \$25,000,000. The majority will be funded using new dollars, and some components will be funded using resources repurposed in more strategic and directed ways. The Governor's budget, introduced early in the legislative session, will provide the sources of revenue in detail for legislative consideration.

The Administration is committed to three key areas: great teachers and leaders, high expectations with fair measures, and the spirit of innovation in our schools. We have high hopes that these proposals will be carefully considered by the Legislature and ultimately enacted. Iowa's journey toward having a world-class school system has already begun, building on the work of talented educators and dedicated citizens who have come before us. It is the charge of our current Iowa leaders to make the necessary changes and to do the hard work to elevate our state education system to meet the needs of the future.

Ultimately, this is an investment in Iowa's most precious resource – its children.